

Hawaii MARINE ON POINT

HAWAII MARINE D SECTION

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LEARNING TO LEAD ...

One step at a time



Sergeants practice how to present their sword during a training exercise at a Sergeants Course held aboard Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.



Sergeant Taofia Piliati, noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Traffic Management Office, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific, Camp H.M. Smith, prepares to drill his platoon during a Sergeants Course class at MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, March 13.

Story and Photos by
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Most Marines never get the opportunity to drill in a platoon – let alone be in the position to lead one.

But the Marines who go through Sergeants Course practice drill and are taught proper movements, commands, and march a platoon.

"All Marines should know how to drill," said Staff Sgt. Larry Learn, Instructor Advisor, Sergeants Course. "It is one of the basic fundamentals to teaching Marines how to be leaders."

The Marines attending the course are given two hours of lectures, one hour of demonstrations and 11 hours of drills. When they drill, they practice with a platoon and use one of four different drill cards.

The Marines choose one card at random and are evaluated on the drill at the end of their training.

There are a variety of skill levels amongst the Marines. Some have attended Corporals Course, some have never led, and some have received training from their unit before attending the course.

"On the first day of drill, I can usually pick out the guys who have been through Corporals Course," said Learn.

Sergeant Tavonne Douglas, a food service specialist who attended Corporals Course in 2005, said it prepared him for the drill in this course. He said his prior training has given him an advantage over some of the sergeants in the course.

There are many sergeants who haven't been to a formal school but were educated before they came to the course, he said.

"My company gunnery sergeant was a drill instructor," said Sgt. Duane Brown, training noncommissioned officer, Supply Company, Combat Service Support Group 3. "He makes sure we are constantly doing drill."

By training before attending the course, Brown said he already knew which foot to call the commands on and how to execute the movements correctly. Although he knows most of the basics, he still takes drilling seriously.

He said he will take every-

thing he has learned at the course to drill instructor school with him in September.

"More companies and staff non-commissioned officers should take the time to teach, not critique, their Marines on drill," Brown said.

Some Marines, like Sgt. Jason Zoesch, range inspector, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, has never drilled or been to a formal school.

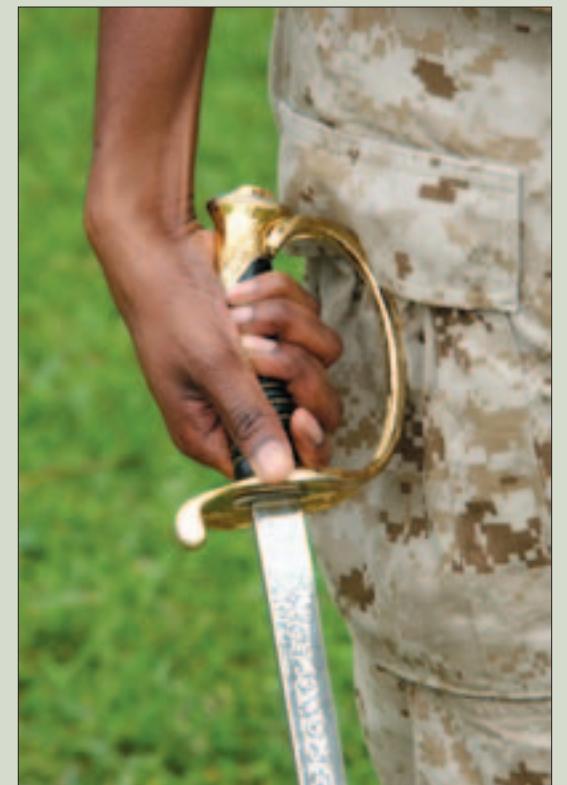
"I've had to invest a lot of personal time to practice drill," Zoesch said. "If I would have taken the initiative to go to Corporals Course, (drilling) would have been a lot easier."

Although he didn't receive any formal training before attending the course, Zoesch said he will make training his Marines his first priority when he returns to his unit.

"I am going to take all of my lance corporals and corporals and teach them drill," he said. "I wish someone would have done it for me."

According to Learn, the drill portion of the course is designed at the basic level, and even though Marines in his class have a variety of skill levels, he believes everyone is getting something out of the training.

He said the instructors volunteer their free time to help those who are struggling with drilling.



Sergeant Ashley Thompson, food service specialist, Headquarters Battalion, executes the second step of the present sword movement.



Sergeant Cecilia Reynoso, radio operator, operations, Camp H.M. Smith, drills her platoon during a training session on K-Bay.